



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
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EPIPACTIS GIGANTEA
GIANT HELLEBORINE

Giant Helleborine is a perennial with leafy stems that are 30-100 cm tall and which arise from short rhizomes. The leaves are sessile and up to 20 cm long; the lower are ovate, while the upper are lance-shaped. The herbage is rough to the touch or smooth and glabrous. The numerous flowers are borne singly in a long, narrow, leafy-bracted inflorescence located at the tops of the stems. The lance-shaped sepals are green with brownish stripes and approximately 15 mm long. The upper two petals are shorter and broader than the sepals. The lower petal is sac like and longer and more reddish than the sepals. The nodding capsule is elliptic. Flowering in late June-early August

The tall stems with reddish flowers in the leaf axils make this species one of our most distinctive orchids. It is not easily confused with other species.